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291 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511
203 776 7378
HomeHavenVillages.org

 East Rock Village

 Westville Village

 Amity Village

Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 886: An Act Concerning Aging in Place

As a member of the 2012 Task Force to Study Aging in Place and as president of HomeHaven, a nonprofit that helps seniors in greater New Haven remain in their own homes as they age, I write in strong support of *An Act Concerning Aging in Place*.

HomeHaven is one of a growing number of "villages," defined as self-governing, grassroots, community-based organizations that coordinate access to a variety of supportive services to promote aging in place, social integration, health, and well-being. We have been in business since October 2010, and have a membership approaching 200 individuals. We serve a middle to upper-middle class population and are now reaching out to more diverse neighborhoods; offering reduced rates to those with modest means. Our purpose is to give our members the support they need so they will not slide into eligibility for public assistance. We work with a tiny paid staff, a large number of volunteers, and vetted service providers.

The bill addresses a number of important needs. I support all of them, but I will take the time to address three that are most urgent for us:

- Section 2 (Transportation): Transportation is our most requested service, as it is for many social service agencies. We use volunteers who not only drive but become friends with their passengers, help them into the car, carry groceries. Most of our drivers are also our members, and as they age they increasingly need rides themselves. We are hard-pressed to fill the need. We have members in five towns and we continue to grow, and increasingly medical facilities are locating in the suburbs. The need for a regional approach is obvious and urgent.
- Section 4 (Tax credits) Providing in-home care places huge burdens on family members, sometimes affecting employment, and is a frequent reason given for seeking nursing-home care. This provision offers some modest but badly needed financial support.
- Section 5 (Conservation and development plans) Including provisions for housing seniors in town development plans makes sense in aging populations. Many seniors live alone in large houses that could easily accommodate home sharing or housing for caregivers, but for zoning prohibitions. We live in an area with many colleges and universities and, carefully done, we might solve student-housing and elder-care problems at the same time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of these important changes.

Jane L. Jarvis, president
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Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 63396: An Act Concerning Livable Communities

As a member of the 2012 Task Force to Study Aging in Place and as president of HomeHaven, a nonprofit that helps seniors in greater New Haven remain in their own homes as they age, I write in strong support of *An Act Concerning Livable Communities*.

HomeHaven is one of a growing number of "villages," defined as self-governing, grassroots, community-based organizations that coordinate access to a variety of supportive services to promote aging in place, social integration, health, and well-being. We have been in business since October 2010, and have a membership approaching 200 individuals. We serve a middle to upper-middle class population and are now reaching out to more diverse neighborhoods; offering reduced rates to those with modest means. Our purpose is to give our members the support they need so they will not require public assistance.

Our opening followed some three years of grassroots organizing, fund raising, and inventing ourselves. We were helped by the example of Beacon Hill Village in Boston, founded eleven years ago, but we had to discover for ourselves the resources available to us in our community and in the state. Other villages exist or are in formation in Connecticut, but some have failed.

The existence of a forum and clearinghouse for information about resources and best practices would have been and will be of enormous value to us. The model of Livable Communities promises the kind of coordinated effort that will be both efficient and effective. As we face the rising tide of elders who will need support of various kinds as they age, we surely cannot afford to duplicate efforts and to waste scarce public or private resources.

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